

THE USE

AND

BENEFIT

OF

Divine Meditation,

IN TWO SERMONS

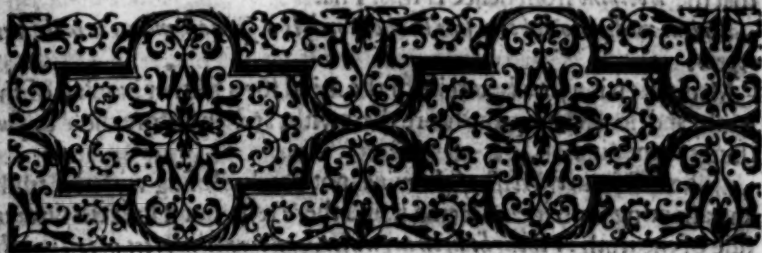
Preached by that Reverend and
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A S E R M O N

OF The use and benefit of Divine MEDITATION.

HAGGAI I. 5.

*Now therefore saith the Lord of Hosts,
Consider your wayes.*



He Prophet reproveth the people because they could find in their hearts to mind their *own* houses, and yet were careless of the house of *the Lord*: the Lord had sent a drought & a famine, and sundry punishments upon them for *this* thing, and yet they laid it not to heart; and therefore he sends *Haggai* the Prophet unto them to call them to repentance; and (which is an admirable course, and little thought of in the world) he begins with holy meditation and consideration: *Now therefore thus saith the Lord, consider your wayes*; that is, both in regard of the *course* of them, your wicked wayes; and also in regard of the bitter *fruit* of them, your wretched and unprosperous wayes. Here be two things very remarkable according to the Text;

1. The *repetition* and inforcing of it again, for he urgeth it again, *Consider your wayes*, in the seventh verse.

2. The *benefit* that came by it, it brought them to repentance, for they

all obeyed the voice of the Lord, and the words of the Prophet, verſe, 12. So that the Doctrine from hence is this, That

Serious meditation of our ſins by the Word, is a ſpeciall means to make men repent,

Doct. 1.

Meditation is a ſetled exerciſe of the mind for a further inquiry of the truth, and ſo affecting the heart therewith, and therefore their be four things in meditation.

1.

The firſt is an exerciſe of the mind, not barely cloſing with the truth, and aſſenting unto it, and ſeeing it, and there reſts, but it looketh on every ſide of the truth: *I thought upon my wayes, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies*, Pſa. 119, 59. ſaith David, that is, I looked on my wayes on both ſides, above and beneath, it's taken from curious works, which are the ſame on both ſides, ſo that they which work them, muſt often turn them on every ſide, uſed *Exod. 38. 33.* as being works with two faces, as one well obſerves, ſo it was with David, I turned my wayes up-ſide down, and looked every way upon them: thou never meditateſt, unleſſe thou look on thy wayes on both ſides with all circumſtances. An elegant phraſe we have, *Dan. 12. 4. Many ſhall run to and fro, and knowledge ſhall abound, and be increaſed.* [*Run to and fro*] what is that? It is not the bodily removing of man from one place to another ſo much, as buſie ſtirring of the mind from one truth to another, ſo that it ſeeth the whole ſelvedge and compaſſe of the truth: thou wilt never get the truth to be meditated of, till thou run to and fro in it, meditate it on this ſide, and meditate it on that ſide, look on it in every nook of it. Meditation is like perambulation, when men go the bounds of the Pariſh, they go in every part of it, and in every ſkirt of it: ſo meditation is the perambulation of the ſoul, when the ſoul looks how far ſin goes, how far the fleſh goes, how far the wrath of God againſt it goes.

2.

Secondly, as it is an exerciſe, ſo it is a ſetled exerciſe, it is not a ſudden ſaſh of a mans conceit, but it dwells upon a truth. When a man is in a deep meditation upon a thing he neither ſees, nor hears, nor attends any thing elſe; the ſtream of the heart is ſetled upon the truth received, *The word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the world*, 1 *John 2. 14.* How came theſe young men to overcome Satan? not by looking into the word, or only thinking of the word, but by letting the word abide in them. When a man hath been offered an injury, his heart is alwayes ſetled upon it, when he eats, his mind runs on the injury; when he walks, and talks, ſtill his mind runs on the injury: ſo thy heart muſt go on the truth, 2 *Tim. 3. Continue in things thou haſt learned*: that is, take up thy manſion houſe in them. A wicked man may turn into the word ſometimes to think of it, but it is as a man goes into another mans houſe: there is not his dwelling.

3.

Thirdly, it is to make a further inquiry. Meditation doth not only ſettle upon the truth known, but it alſo would ſain know more of thoſe truths, that are ſubject to it, as a man without may ſee the out-ſide of the houſe, but he cannot ſee the rooms within, unleſſe he come nigh, and draw the latch, and come into the houſe, and go into the rooms, and look about them, Meditation pulls the latch of the truth and looks into every

every closet, and every cupboard, & every angle of it. Here is my sin, here is my uncleanness, and here is Gods anger, here is the woful evil that will follow upon it, and here is a remedy against it. Meditation searches into all the lofts and closets of the truth. *The entrance of thy word giveth understanding unto the simple.* Ps. 119. 30. The ingresse (as one expounds it) or going into thy word, gives understanding, the wicked stand looking upon the truth without the doors, but it is the ingresse, or going into the truth, that gives understanding. Indeed the truth is like a neat Palace, (saith *Chrysostome*) the Spirit of God is like the light of the Sonne that shineth into it, the wicked they stand without, like fools peeping in at the windows, and there be many thousand of pearls that are not manifest unto them: the house seems dark to them that stand without. Thou must enter into the word, and into every particular truth in it, and go up stairs, and down stairs, and have an eye into every room. There thou shalt find humility, there contrition, there conversion, there Christ and his Spirit in one closet, there all his Jewels in that, and that box, all is manifest within doors.

Fourthly, it labours to affect the heart, it doth not only labour to know more and more of the truth, but also it labours to bring it home to the heart. *The good woman considers a field and buys it.* Prov. 31. 16. This is (saith *Ambrose*) the good Christian soul, if in civility, then much more in Divinity, he considers the truth and buyes it, he taketh it as his own, and appropriates it unto himself, *To this* (saith *Eliphaz*) *we have searched out, so it is, hear it, and know it for thy self.* Job 5. 27. When thou canst say of the truth, lo this is it, we have searched it out, I have dived into it, perused it, so it is, even so indeed: all this is, that thou mayest apply it unto thy self, and know it for thy good.

The first Reason is, because meditation musters up all weapons, and gathers all forces of arguments for to presse our sins, and lay them heavy upon the heart: This usury is Spirituall and good, when meditation, like usurers, who grind and suck the blood of the needy, and are not content with their Principal, but will have consideration for every pound they lay out; yea for every shilling, and that for every week, and every moone, and every quarter, and every yeer: the poor man could be content to pay the principall; but to exact use upon use, this kills him; so meditation exacteth upon the soul, and holdeth it to use upon use. *You have committed evil in a corner, but you shall not carry it away so.* Item, it was against the knowledge of God revealed; Item, against many mercies received; Item, against many judgements threatened, against many checks of conscience, against many Vows and Promises; remember that, O my soul, Item for that, and Item for this, Item for every last, and every circumstance, thus oft, and in this place, and at that time, in that manner. So meditated the prodigal. Look as it is in warrs, were there but many scores come against an Army, they might be conquered; or many hundreds, they might be resisted; but if many thousands should come against a smal Army, it would be in danger indeed. Meditation leadeth a whole Army of arguments, a whole Army of curses, miseries, judgements, commandments against the soul, how ever one misery or plague will not knock it down, but the soul may

brook it, and goe away with it: but meditation brings a great *Armada* of arguments, and tells the soul, God is against thee, and against thy wayes: God is against thee where ever thou art, or what ever thou doest. Then the heart begins to cry out, as *Elisha* his servant did, *Master, what shall we do?* 2 *Kings* 6: 25. So many horses against us, so many charets, and so many men against us: Master what shall we do? so many sins, and so heinous; so many judgements and so heavy; and so many evils, and spiritual maladies! Oh, what shal I do to be saved! that I should commit sin against a God that hath damned innumerable Angels, millions of Kings, Princes, and Nobles! that I should commit it against this God, so mercifull to me, so gracious, so patient, so good to my soul! that I, wretched rebel, should for a cup of drink refuse heaven! for a lust not worth a straw under my foot, cast off Christ, and grace, and all! how shal I do? Then the soul stands in a maze.

The second Reason is, because *meditation* having huddled up all *Items* against the soul, and brought it in all bills of account, it *fastens sin upon the soul*, I mean it makes the soul feel it, so that it must needs be convinced without any evasion. Meditation deals with a man as *Elisha* dealt with the messengers of the King *Joram*, the murderer he was coming to do mischief to the Prophet, and the prophet did shut the door, and held him fast at the door, 2 *Kings* 6: 32. and then he made him know that the evill was from the Lord, before he could stir: so meditation, when the soul would faine out of doors into its old course again, it shuts the door upon it, and holds it fast: Meditation tells the soul, this evil is from the Lord upon thee, O my soul, if thou stir in or out upon this or that lust any more, this evil, that course, that vengeance and damnation, if ever thou stir forth, thou lovest thy mercy, thou lovest Christ, thou lovest all possibility of comfort. Stir not out, if thou dost, thou wilt rue it. Sometimes when men hear the Word, they go away touched, they resolve not to commit sin again as they have done, yet when they are gone, it works not, but the heart recoyls again, and turns to its old passe, The reason is, because they meditate not upon the Word, they fasten it not upon their consciences.

It is with the word as it is with a *salve*: if a man that hath never so good a salve, that will heal any thing in four and twenty hours, if a man should do nothing but lay it to the wound, & take it off, lay it on and take it off, it will not heal the wound: and no marvel, Why? he will not let it lye on, the best salve will not heal the soare, nor eat out the corruption, unlesse it be bound on and let lye: so it is with the Word, many a soul hears it, *heart, conscience, affections*, all *toucht*: but when he is gone out of the Church, all is gone, his affections dye, his heart dyes, and his conscience becomes unfruitful: Why? he is *still removing* of the salve, and will not let it lye on, and therefore the Word over-powers not his corruptions: the Word is like the salve, *conviction of conscience* is like the laying on of the salve, *meditation* the binding of it to the soare.

St. *James* compares a slight hearer to a man that looks into a glasse, who soon forgets his visage, but a good hearer doth two things: First, he *stoops down and looks into it*, to take a perfect view of his estate; Secondly,

condly he continues looking into it, James 1. 25. he doth not leave the glasse behind him, but he carrieth away the glasse with him: *This man shall be blessed in his deed.*

If the pills be never so bitter, yet let a man swallow them speedily, there is no great distaste; but if a man chew a pill, it will make him deadly sick. Thy sins are like those pills, they go down very pleasingly, because thou swallowest them: thou swallowest down thine oaths, lies, ignorance, pride, thou swallowest down the threats of the Lord, but if thou wouldest chew these bitter pills, and meditate and ruminate, and chew the cud, drunkenness would be as bitter as hell, swearing and security, and Saboth breaking, would be as bitter as wormwood; thou durst not go on in them, they would make thee look sorely upon them for ever: like a man that hath chewed a pill, he can hardly ever see a pill, but his stomach riseth against it. *Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, Hos. 2. 6.* I will not be so precise (saith the heart) I will go on as I have done, I will go after these and these courses; *I will hedge up thy way with thorns* (saith God,) meditation is Gods instrument, and sets a thorn in the way to every sin, to bring the heart back again. Would the heart lash out into luke-warmness? Meditation sets a thorn in the way, *God will spue thee out of his mouth.* Would the heart fall forth into any sin? Meditation sets a thorn in the way, *Cursed art thou if thou dost err from Gods Commandements.* The heart cannot step forth into any lust, but meditation meets it with a thorn, this curse, and that curse, this plague, and that plague. Would the heart reach at mercy in its sin? Meditation pricks it, mercie is vengeance unto thee, so long as thou hankrest after sin. Would the heart reach after Christ in his sin? Meditation pushes it back with a thorn: no Christ for thee, but a severe judge, so long as thou itcheest after thy vanities.

What shal we think of them then, which are loth to practice this duty? Most men are loth, though they be willing enough to meditate on their worldly affairs. The Mariner meditates and considers his *course* by his *Compass*, or else he might soon runne on the quick-sands; a Pilgrim is full of thoughts, what? *am I in my right way?* He never comes to a doubtfull turning, but he stands in a study and muses, O which is my right way? The Merchant meditates, and his mind runs on his *Count-book*; or else he is soon *bankrupt*: The voluptuous man his thoughts run on his pleasure: the drunkard on his cups, the proud man on his credit. But it is one thing to look to that which is thine, and another thing to look to thy self, *Take heed to your selves*, saith the Lord, *Deut. 11. 16. Deut. 12. 30. Deut. 4. 9. Exod. 34. 12.* as if he should say, think on thy self, & of thy poor soul, let thy Meditation run on thy poor soul. The heart is untoward unto this duty, and as unwilling as a Bear to be brought to the stake: the Bear would rather be rambling abroad then be baited: so men had rather let their hearts ramble about any thing, then bait them for their sins, yea men scoff at it, saying, shall we alwayes be poring on our sins? shall we run mad? shall we drive our selves to despair? cannot men keep themselves well while they are well?

The poor man, he hath no time for this tedious duty: the rich man he needs it not, the wicked they dare not, so no man will, *No man re-*

pented him of his wickednesse, saying, *What have I done?* Jer. 8. 6. no man would meditate and think with himself, what is my case? how stands my condition before God? what evil have I done? in the Ark and in the old Law if there were any beast that *chewed not the cud*, it was a sign of an *unclean* beast: the word implies the bringing up of their meat into their mouths again, and sitting down to chew it again. But now men like unclean beasts, swallow down the food of their souls unchewed, and will not meditate thereof, that it may turn to good nutriment: but like Cormorants, they take it down by whole-sale, and are never the better. So the Word is to them as the Quails to the Israelites, while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them, and smote them with a very great plague, Num. 11. 33. So the Word of God sticks in their teeth, ere they chew it, or meditate upon it, the wrath of God falls upon them, and strikes them with a very great plague of hardness of heart, and leanness of soul. But the truth is: you that will not now see your sins nor meditate on them, you shall see them, and meditate on nothing but on fear, *Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see and be ashamed*, Isaiah 26. 11.

Let. 1.

Now the *Lets* of serious meditation are, First, *vain company*. When Peter saw the people touched, Acts 2. 37. he said unto them, *Save yourselves from this untoward generation*, verse 40. as if he should say, If you love your selves, God hath touched your hearts, suffer not Satan and these wicked instruments, to steal away these impressions of terrour from your Souls. If ever you love your souls, sort not your selves with this untoward generation. See, as it humbles you, so let meditation follow upon it, so that it may still humble you. Ill company brings a man to the gallows (as the proverb is) and ill company will bring a man to hell (say I.) and meditation cannot be admitted to it. David would not have a wicked man to abide in his sight, when he was to meditate: he wisht that there were never a wicked man in the world, much less would he keep company with them. *My meditation of him shall be sweet: let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more: Bless thou the Lord, O my soul*, Ps. 104. 35.

Let 2.

The second *Let* is, *multitude of worldly busineses*. A dream (saith Solomon) comes through multitude of busineses, Eccles. 5. Multitude of busineses causeth the mind so to run on them, that they do even dream of them in their sleep, as Lucretius, Seneca, Claudian, and many others of the heathens have observed. He that over-employs himself, his meditations of heaven are dreaming meditations, his thoughts, dreaming thoughts, he can never seriously meditate on the good of his soul. Many ingrosse busineses into their hands never thinking they have enough, they are so greedy after the world, and so careless of heaven. So they make their hearts like high-way-ground: the word sown in their hearts, is like seed sown in the high-way, where is such a throughfare, and a broad Carriers road of earthly affairs, that all the word and meditation thereof is trodden down as the grass in the high-way, which cannot grow, so neither meditation in a busie-bodied heart. For a good meditating mind, (*Nemo ad illam pervenit*

venit occupatus, saith *Seneca* no man ever came to it furfeited with im-
ployments. *David* although he had abundance of State-affairs, both his
hands full, yet he would not to be over-charged, but that he might medi-
tate in Gods word: *My hands also* (not all down to businesse only in the
world, but also up to thy Law) *will I lift up to thy commandments, which I*
have loved, and I wil meditate on thy statutes. *Psal.* 119. 48. Take not too
much upon thee, like those grasping worldlings, that wil have a finger in
a hundred things: *Martha, Martha, thou art cumbered about many things,*
but one thing is needfull, and Mary hath chosen the better part, *Luke* 10. 41.
and what was that *one thing*? *Mary* was sitting and meditating in, and
pondring Christs words, not (as *Theophylact* expounds it) as if we
would say, *Martha, Martha, thou art cumbered about many dishes, but*
one thing is needfull only, only one dish, though indeed so it be,
yet he here speaks not only of one dish, but of many cares which hin-
der that one necessary duty of hearing and meditating of the word of
God.

Thirdly, *ignorance*. A man cannot meditate of a thing he knows
not; nor thou of thy sins, if thou be not skilful in Gods Catalogue of
thy sins; nor of mercies and promises, if thou beest not versed in them;
nor of his Precepts, if thou be not expert in them. the *Psalmist* proveth
that he had more knowledge than all his teachers: Why? because he
used to meditate. *I have more understanding then all my Tutors, for thy testi-*
monies are my meditation, *Psal.* 119. 99.

Fourthly, *aversnesse of the heart*: The heart is like the swine, medi-
tation is like the yoke: the Hogge would fain get into forbidden fields
for to grub them; the yoke that hinders him, but he cannot abde it, eve-
ry step he takes, he lifts up his foot to strike it off if he could, so the
heart would fain break through hedges, and get into forbidden wayes,
and if thou wouldest meditate, it would every moment lift up it's heel
to put thee besides it. If it cannot put thee besides it, it wil mar it if it can,
and therefore *David* praid to God to settle his heart upon the right, and
put his yoke upon him, or it would never be stedfast else upon meditati-
on. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be ever accepta-*
ble in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer, *Psal.* 119. 14.

This *aversnesse of the heart* consists in three things: First, in the care-
lesnesse of the heart, the heart prizeth not meditation, nor the things
of grace that are to be meditated on; it will not be at the cost and charge,
nor at the pains for them. *To what end is a price in the hands of a fool, seeing*
there is no heart to get wisdom? *Prov.* 17. 16. The heart will not be
brought to Gods price: it would fain have the wares at a cheap
rate.

Secondly in *runnings of it*: the heart is like a vagrant rogue, he would
rather be hanged, than tied to his parish. Thou canst not bring it to
prayer, but it will be a gadding on by-thoughts: thou canst not bring it
to a Sermon, but it will be roving after wandring imaginations, thou
canst not bring it to a meditation, but it will be a gossiping forth.
When Christ came to bind men with his blessed cords, and bind
their hearts to him, *Psal.* 2. they fall a meditating afterwards, but

it was meditating and imagining vain things, *verse 1.* and when they saw they were to be tyed up, *Iush* (say they) *let us break their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us, verse 3.* What, do Ministers call us to such strictnesse, thinking to imprison our hearts in their stocks? away with their bonds, no, we will have none of it.

3 Thirdly, in the wearisomnesse of the heart: It is as weary of meditation, as a Cur is of the whip, and the chain; Oh how it barks and maunders till it be loose! yea, though it be never so eager upon it at the first, it's jaded presently. When God called the Jews to sanctifie his Name, they thought in their hearts, *O, what a wearinesse is this! and ye have snuffed at it* (saith the Lord) *ye brought which was lame, and torn and sick, Malac. 1. 13.* What a wearinesse is it to meditate? saith the heart, it snuffs, it is untoward, it is lumpish; it would faine tear off a piece of the duty, or bring it wanting a leg, or without soundnesse and sincerity, yet some of them (saith Calvin) were so humbled, that they thought on the name of the Lord, *Malac. 3. 16.* they thought, and meditated, and forced their hearts to consider thoroughly.

Use 2.

This may serve for terror unto all those, who for all this that hath been spoken, dare sit down without it, yea, the world will not beleeve these things, nor meditate therein: yea, they blame Gods messengers, that call to fore upon them. *Habakkuk* was so served; he preached the mercies of God to the humble, and the judgements of God to the wicked: they ask him why he was so mad? well (sayes the Prophet) *I will stand upon my watch, and see what the Lord sayes unto me, that I may answer to them that reprove me, Hab. 2. 1.* What did the Lord tell him? *Write the vision, and make it plain upon Tables, that he may run that reads it, verse 2.* Will they not beleeve? Will they rove? Will they not meditate steadily upon these things? Will they not let their hearts stay and meditate and consider? The vision shall be so plain, that he that runs may read it. If thou wilt not stay, and meditate herein, the word is so plain to thy condemnation, that if thou didst not but think of it with a running thought, thou maist read thine own vengeance, thine own woes, in regard of the multitude of them. He that runnes by a way full of holes and pits, though he stand not meditating, where are the pits, yet he may run and see them. The book of God is full, leaves and cover, and all, of woes against thee, *Lam. 2. 10.* It is written without, there thou maist read thy sins written; it is written likewise within, there thou maist read thy plagues.

Secondly, in regard of the greatnesse of them, he that runnes along, and loe a great town on fire, though he stay not to meditate on it, what or where it is, yet he may run and read it: so is the curse of sinners a great curse, *Zeph. 1. 10.* he that runs may read it.

Thirdly, in regard of the proximie and neernesse of them. He that runnes, if a sword come out at his throat, though he doth not stop to meditate, what is this at my throat, yet he cannot but see it. *Behold the Judge standeth before the door, James, 5. 9.* Take heed how thou grudge, or sinnest in any particular, behold the Judge standeth before the door,

door, behold it and meditate on it with thy heart; if not, he is nigh enough, thou canst not step out of doors unto any sin, but though thou runnest, thou must needs see the Judge that will Judge thee, Iteming thy sins, noting thy wayes, observing thy courses, ready to unhasp the door on thee, to hale thee unto hell in thy sins. *Whose end is destruction* Why? Even those that *mind earthly things*, Phil. 3. 19. If thy mind and meditation run more on thy ground, cattel, goods, kitchen, house businesse, earthly talk, discourtes, thoughts, more than of heaven, thy end is destruction. If thy thoughts will not stay here, do but runne, and thou maist read it: *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I am come to fulfill them*, Matthew 5. 17. Some (saith Chrysostome) might think now Christ is come, it is no matter though we not be so strict; Christ is enough. Think not thus (saith Christ) but rather think and meditate that I am come to fulfill it my self, and to see it fulfilled in those I mean to save, so as to make it a rule of their lives. Themistocles said, he could not sleep in his bed for continual thinking and meditating on Miltiades his Tryumphs, And how canst thou sleep in thy bed, if thou wouldest but meditate on these places of Scripture? Retire thy self apart, there is no casting up of mans account in a croud: Let me alone, I am busie, so we use to say, when we would be private.

Thou must do with thy soul as Ehud did to Eglon, who said, *I have a Meanes* *secret errant to thee, O King*, and so all went out, and he said: *I have a message from God to thee*, and to stab him at his heart, Judges 3. 19. So (for Ehud was a type of Christ, saith Lavator) I have a secret errant to thee, O my soul, and so let all go forth: I have a message from God to thee, a message of wrath for thy Pride, a message of wrath for thy vain hopes: Thus, saith the Lord; Cursed art thou, O my soul, stab it to the heart with this spirituall Dagger, wound it with the blade and haft and all, till thou have let out the fat and the dirt, the filth and iniquity all out, The Prophet speaking of mens looking on Christ whom they have pierced, this meditating and laying to heart that they have crucified the Lord Jesus, saith that *they shall mourn every one in private, the house of David apart, and their wives apart, the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart, the house of Shimei apart, and their wives apart, every family apart, and their wives apart*, Zach. 12. 10.

The second meanes, if thou wouldest meditate aright, observe the *Meanes* times of privacy,

First, the morning, that is the best time for study: David chose the morning for meditation, Psal 5. 1. 3. Let them hear this, (saith Chrysostome) that arise betimes in the morning to serve their Hogs and their Doggs, their bellies and their backs, before they serve God in meditation or prayer, unlesse it be the mumbling and roaring a few [*Lord have mercy upon us*] that pray not till after many other busineses, it may may be, not then neither. David prayed and meditated in the morning. In the morning thou walkest thy face and thy hands, but thy soul hath more need, which thou walkest not: in the morning thou puttest thy cloathes on thy body, but thou puttest not on afresh the new man upon thy soul; in the morning thou shakest off sleepinesse from thine eyes,

but thou shakest not off drowsinesse from thy soul. Thou lookest into the glasse in the morning, to see if thy face be as it should be; but thy soul is not composedly looking into the glasse of Gods word. In the morning looke up in prayer, look up in thanksgiving, look up in meditation.

2. Secondly, the night too; *O Lord, I meditate on thee in the night watches*, *Psal. 93.* not as carnall ones doe, when they cannot sleep, then their mind runs on their Cow and their Calf, their markets and vanities, this neighbour and that neighbour, like *Petronius* his dogge, that was hunting while he lay asleep in his kennel.

3. Thirdly, *In the evening, I prevent the night watches, that I might meditate*, *Psal. 119. 148.* he did not as wicked men doe, sleep like a horse in the stable on his litter, with his neck tyed to the manger: they did go to bed with their hearts roped to the world, worldly thoughts, this thought and that thought, and God knows what.

4. Fourthly, *when the heart is touched* at a Sermon or Sacrament, or observing of any judgement or mercy, or act of Gods providence, it is best striking when the Iron is hot; *David*, when his heart was touched at the reproches of the wicked, then he meditated, *Psal. 119. 23.* When the Instrument is in tune, then it is good playing upon it; when a Churl is in a good mood, then it is fittest to deal with him. Oft will thy heart be out of tune, oft churlish, and in an ill mood: if thou lettest the good opportunity goe, thou knowest not when thou shalt have such another. When the fish is nibbling at the bait, then it is good twiching at the angle-rod, when the heart is a nibbling at grace, then gave a pluck at it by meditation. See *Acts 17. 11.* now while the time lasts, see thou maist get into heaven.

Means 3.

Thirdly, *Rub up thy self and thy memory*; call as much to mind as thou canst, what evill thou hast done ever since thou wast born, what in the womb, what in the cradle, childhood, youth, age; what a servant, what a Master; what as a servant, what as a son, what as a neighbour, what as an inferiour, what as a superiour, either in thought, or word or deed; how often thou hast omitted good duties, or done them by halves; Item for this; and Item for that. They shall remember themselves and turn unto the Lord, *Psal. 22. 27.* First, they shall remember themselves, and say, what have I done, O wretch! how carelessly have I lived! Secondly, so meditating, they shall turn unto the Lord. Many say, Oh! they cannot remember their sins. They lye in a thousand particulars: for they can remember to commit them well enough. See *Lam. 3. 19. 20. 21.* our Greek translation turns it, *I spake to my self, and meditated*: as if they should say, O what a rebell have I been! how unthankfull, how unprofitable under all the means of grace! I may thank my sins for all the plagues of the Almighty that are upon me: if he had damned me, I had been well served. What follows? *The heart bowed, and was humbled*, as it is in the text.

Means 4.

The fourth means. Rouze up thy heart. As it is with the eye of the body, so it is with the eye of the Soul: when a man would look wisely upon a thing, as if he would look thorow it, he sets his eye on it, as

Paul

Paul set his eyes on *Elymas*, *Ah thou child of the Devill, thou, &c.* Acts 13.9. Meditation is the setting of the eye of the soul upon a thing: set thine eye upon thy selfe, and say, Ah thou childe of the wicked, why hath Satan filled thy heart! O wretched heart! whence hadst thou thy selfe-love? hadst thou not it from the Devill? God might do well to send thee to the Devill, if thou lovest so to be his Broker. Set thine eyes stedfastly upon thine own wayes, and thou shalt see infinite hellish evils in thy sins.

The third Use is for *Reprehension*. What is more usual than this, Use 3. that men make slight account of their sins? Nay, when God tels them in their hearts, Thou shalt not do this, thou shalt not doe that, yet they meditate and think, Why may I not? *Samuel* bid *Saul* stay for directions from him, before he sacrificed unto God. It seems that God spoke to his heart. Stay till *Samuel* comes to direct thee: yet *Saul* forced himselfe to disobey, and to do Sacrifice; 1. Sam. 13. 12. he was bold, as *Abraham* turns it, he confirmed himselfe, as *Pagnin* translates it: he thrust himselfe upon the doing of it; God forbid him, he would do it: God urged him in his conscience not to doe it, yet he would do it: God again whispered to him not to do it, yet he forced himselfe to do it; as if he should say, I hope I may do it, I have stayed seven days waiting an hour, or a piece of an hour; and a little piece breaks no square: No? God rejected *Saul* for that venture; God would have forced him by meditation, O no, doe it not by no means: he made him think, Oh, it is against Gods commandments, I may not do it. No, but nevertheless he forced himselfe to do it. Thus God deals with thousands and millions in the world: Be not a drunkard, God flings the meditation into the conscience, yet a drunkard thou wilt be. Be not a drunkard again, a drunkard notwithstanding thou wilt be; Be not again, they force themselves, they will go to the Ale-house. And so of all other sins. If men will cast off this work of meditation darted into their souls, they cast off their own mercy. God tels them, pray not, hear not, offer not without directions from me; they dread not the commandment, they will: I trust prayers are good, I will say them. Thus they will not meditate, or if they do, they break it off before it comes to any strength or perfection: yea, Gods own servants, that desire to look towards *Sion*, is not this your complaint oft? I cannot finde sinne heavy: I confesse the word discovers it to me, but I cannot be troubled for it. Look as it is with men in the world, if five hundred pound weight be laid upon the ground, if a man never pluck at it, he shall never feel the weight of it. Your sinnes are not many hundreds, but many thousands, yea many ten thousands: selfe-love, security, hardnesse of heart, base fears, &c. it is impossible to reckon them. The least vain thought that ever you imagined, the least vaine word that ever you uttered, were weight enough to presse your souls down to hell; Therefore what are so many sins and so great, and so often committed? What are they? they are as heavy as rocks and mountains; yet ye feel them not so heavy. Why? Ye weigh them not; if ye did, yee should finde them heavier than the sand, as *David* did when his sinne was ever before him (Psal. 51. 3.) that is,

is, his sinne was ever in his thoughts, and in his meditation, his sin was ever like a huge Millstone before him, and he was ever tugging and pulling to remove it out of his way.

Object.

I, but you will say, How shall I come to feel my burden?

Answer.

I answer, three things are here to be discovered;

First, the ground upon which our meditation must be raised.

Secondly, the manner how to follow it home to the heart.

Thirdly, how to put life and power into it.

The ground I referre to these foure heads:

1.

First, meditate on the goodnesse, patience, and mercy of God, that hath been abused by any of your sins: the greater they have been to you, the greater is every sinne: this maketh them out of measure sinfull, because God is out of measure mercifull. There are many finnes in one, when a man sinnes against many mercies, See *Judg. 2. 2, 3.* Why have ye done thus? I, have done thus and thus mercifully unto you, why have yee done thus unthankfully to me? Why was my mercy abused? Why was my goodnesse sleighted? Why was my patience despised? as if the Lord should say, I speak to your owne conscience, think of it, meditate of it, why have ye done this? Doe ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father? Meditate of it first, and tell me then. For it is a question put to thy meditation to answer. Doe ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people? Wert thou ever in want, but God supplied thee? Wert thou ever in weaknesse, but God strengthened thee? Wert thou ever in straits, but God delivered thee? When thou wert in sicknesse, who cured thee? when thou wert in poverty, who relieved thee? when thou wert in misery, who succoured thee? Hath not God been a gracious God to thee? Every soul can tell, never poor sinner hath had a more gracious God, than I poor sinner have found to my soul. All my bones can say, Lord, who hath been like unto thee? This heart hath been heavy, and thou hast cheered it: this soul hath been distressed, and thou hast eased it: many troubles have befallen me, and thou hast given me a gracious issue. *This poor man* (saith David, pointing to himselfe,) *this poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, Psal. 34. 9.* And shall I thus reward the Lord? shall I sinne against his goodnesse? Then what shall I say? Hear, O heavens, and hearken, O earth; Sunne, stand thou still, and thou Moon be amazed at this, and be avenged on such a heart as this. *The Oxe knows his owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib;* but here is a heart that will not remember to know the Lord. Hear, O heavens, this villany cryeth so loud, that your ears may hear it. Hear all ye Angels add be astonished, here is villany to make your ears glow: yea, hear hell, hear Devils, if ever there were worse committed by you. When men are but *ingenious*, if they have received any kindenesse from a friend, they were never in want but he relieved them: never harbourlesse, but he housed them; never to seek, but he found them: Let a man deal thus kindly with a man, if this man should deny him any ordinary favour; he will be ashamed of himselfe, ashamed to come into his presence. What will he think? his house was mine, his cupboard was mine, and his purse was mine, and his friends

were

were mine, and that I should deal thus unkindly with him, even nature rebukes me. This serious meditation will help to break thy heart.

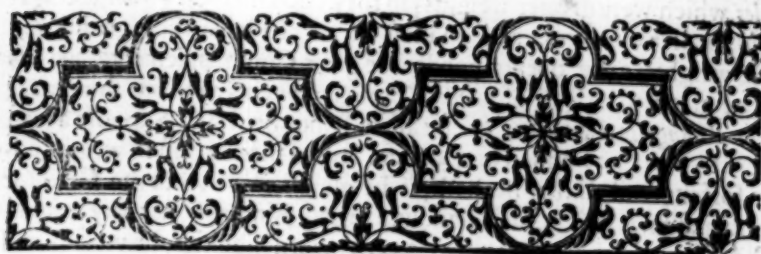
The second ground of meditation is to *mediate on the justice of God*: God is a just God as well as mercifull. Speak all ye Devils in Hell, Doe ye not feel that he is a just God? Speak *Sodome*, Speak *Gomorrhah*, your fire and brimstone can testifie that he is a just God: Speak *Adah*, *Zillah*, and all ye that were drowned in the old world, your deluge can testify he is a just God, *His judgements are all in the world*, 1. *Chro.* 16. 14. What is become of drunken *Nabal*, and swearing *Saul*, and covetous *Abab*, and proud *Fesabel*, and mocking *Fehn*, and envious *Shimei*? What is become of all blind *Jebusites*, and parting, cavilling *Diotrephes*? Justice hath taken hold on them. What is povertie? What is nakednesse? What is famine, sicknesse, the gout, the stone, Feaver, plague? These are the little arrows of Gods justice. What is shame, disgrace, crosses, afflictions, Unseasonable rains, dangerous weather, wars, rumours of wars? What are all the evils under the Sun? They are the little finger of Gods justice. Thou spiest them here and there, in every Town, and in every Parish, in every Country: do they not all witness that he is a just God? Read *Psal.* 7. 11, 12, 13. *God hath bent his bow already* (saith *David*) the arrow is ready to flie out of the string: It wil not be long before it hit thee, if thou meditate not upon amendment: *God is angry with the wicked every day*, as an angry man useth to say, I will be revenged on thee. Wilt thou not give over thy sins? I will be revenged on thee. Read *Psal.* 11. 5, 6, 7. Meditate on this; he will neither spare King nor subject, nor rich, nor poor, nor noble, nor base, nor Judges, nor Justices: yet Judges and Justices may spare, but God will not spare: they may be bribed to pardon, but God will not be fee'd to spare them that go on in their wickednesse; and do I think to escape? Nay, my soul, thou canst never escape, except thou obeyest.

The third ground is, *Meditate on the wrath of God*; O! what wrath is it? Can I stand against it? *It burns like an oven, and all the proud, and all that doe wickedly shall be as stubble, and the day of wrath shall burne them up.* Behold this, saith the Text, *Malac.* 4. 1. Behold it, and meditate on it. Can I goe naked in a hot fiery Oven? Can I lift up my hands against it? My hands will be scorched. Can I kick against it? My legs will be baked. Can I blow upon it with my mouth? My mouth is fiered. Did I ever see lime burned? were I in the limes room, could I endure that boyling? and yet if I live in my sinnes, I shall be as the burning of lime, *I say* 33. 12. Let thy heart meditate terror: *Who among us shall be able to dwell* (that is the meaning of it, as *Montanus* sheweth) *who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall burn with everlasting burning?* verse 14. Gods *mercie* shall say, Take him *wrath*: I would have converted him, but he would not. Gods *goodnesse* shall say, Take him *wrath* I would have been kinde unto him, but he hath abused me; Gods *patience* shall say, Take him *wrath*: I have suffered him a great while, that he might have time of repentance, but he repented not in that time. *God smote Egypt in their first born: Why? For his*

mercy endureth for ever. God overthrew Pharaoh and his host: Why? For his mercy endureth for ever. Plal. 136. 15. He smote great Kings, Sihon a King, and Og a King: for his mercy endureth for ever. So will God damn thee that art a drunkard: Why? for his mercy endureth for ever. God will confound thee that art a worldling: Why? for his mercy endureth for ever. God will be revenged on thee that art a Luke-warming: Why? for his mercy endureth for ever. This may well make thee teare the hair off thy head, rather than let thee go on in thy finnes. See Ierem. 7. 29. Meditate on this.

4. The fourth ground: *Meditate on the constancy of God.* As the Lord was an enemy to wicked men, so he continues the same God still, a constant enemy to them still. As the Lord would not endure sinne heretofore, so he is constant, he still will not endure it. Did the Lord once say, *Weep and howle drunkards: Joel 1. 5.* he is constant, so he saith still. Did the Lord say, *he would burn up sabbath-breakers: Jer. 17. 27.* he is constant, so he saith still. *Who ever hardened his heart against the Lord, and prospered: Job 9. 14.* as if he should say, I put it to thee to meditate of it: canst thou shew me a president? did ever any man harden his heart against Gods Word, in his sinne, that prospered? Did *Senacherib* prosper in his will-worship? Did *Judas* prosper in his covetousnesse? Did *Jeconiah* prosper in his stubboinesse? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer? Where is he that counted the towers? *Tour fathers, where are they, saith Zachariah?* Did not my words take hold of them? and are they not all now in hell, that have ever lived and died in their sin, from the beginning of the world? Thou canst not shew me one drunkard, or one mocker, or one prophane person, or one formall professor, from the day that man was created upon the earth, that is not now in hell, if he be dead. Meditate on this, how canst thou expect to be the one onely in all the world that shall escape, if thou livest and dyest in thy sins? If hell were opened, and the bottomlesse pit were lookt into, thou shouldst see every soul that ever lived, and died in their sins, even every soul; there is not one soul missing. Meditate on this; when I dye, do I think I shall not be there? nay, I shall be there too, unless aforehand I enter into the *strait gate*, and walk in the narrow way of newnesse of life.

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The Second
S E R M O N
 OF
 The use and benefit of Divine
 M E D I T A T I O N.

H A G G A I 1. 5.

*Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts,
 Consider your wayes.*



OW follows the manner, how to follow Meditation on home to the heart. Here are four things to be practised.

First, weigh and ponder all these things in thy heart. It's said of Mary, she pondred, Luke 2. 19. and kept all these sayings in her heart: verse 51. The words signifie two things: First, she compared these things together, Secondly, she cast them in the scales together. Dost thou know

God is mercifull? ponder it with his justice. Dost thou know that Jesus Christ dyed for sinners? ponder it with the true drift of it, how that it is not to let men go on in their sins, but to save them from their finnes. Dost thou obey God in this or that Commandement? O ponder thy life with the rest, Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy wayes be established. Prov. 4. 26. A man that eats his meat well, forty morsels well, yet one crum going awry throttles him. Thou walkest in these and these Commandements, yea, but there be other Commandments besides these: dost thou walk in them too? thou must, if thou meanest to have thy

thy ways to be established. The Jews had their *continers, talents, minas, sicles*, which were greater weights; so they had also their *gerahs*, and *agalahs*, smaller measures, and smallest of all: so have thou greater and lesse weights; great ones to ponder the great Commandements, and lesse to weigh even the least of Gods Commandements: and see thou make true *Evangelical* weight, or else all will not be well. Suppose a man were to pay a 100 pound of good and lawful money, and in weight, upon forfeiture of all that he hath; if he weigh it not, but the Creditor doth, and finds it light, he is undone. If thou ponderest not thy wayes, God will ponder them: *Prov. 5. 21.* the word signifies, he weighs and ponders them in a ballance, or scales; he puts the word of his Gospel in the one, and thy goings and obedience in the other. *Thou art weighed, and art found too light, thy kingdom is departed from thee*, saith God to *Belshazzar, Dan. 5. 27.* So if thou be light, thou shalt be weighed, and so found, thou shalt lose the Kingdom of heaven for ever.)

Secondly, strip sin, and look upon it stark naked. sin covers and disguiseth it self with pleasure, profit, ease, and many a whorish garment, and so inticeth the heart. Even a toad, if she were covered over with gold, those that saw only the gold would pocket it up; if it were naked they would sling it in the kennel. Why doe men love covetousnesse? Why? its hooded with profit. Why carding, dicing, hunting, hawking, tabring, piping, and more than the word alloweth? Why? they are cloathed with pleasure, and delight. Its the duty of Ministers to unmask and uncase sin, and pluck off the vail that covers it from appearing unto men. The not doing of this is the cause that men do not meditate on the vilenesse of their sin, never are humbled, never escape Gods wrath; even because they not *discover mens iniquities, Lam. 2. 14.* Alas the profit of thy sins shall cease, the pleasure cease, the ease cease, and all these goodly suits shall vanish away, when the soul comes to dye, or to stand before the judgement seat of Christ: sin will remain, but thy silver, and thy gold, where will that be then? thy laughter, and thy merriment, what will become of that then? thy delight will be *gone*. Meditate therefore with thy self, my sin is now gainful, and easie, and pleasant; but what will my sin become, when I come to lye on my death-bed? what good will it do me, when I have most need of succour? I will never acknowledge *him* my friend, that will turn against me, when I have most need of him. Alas, I must dye, I must come to judgement, I, I must go either to heaven or to hell: the profit that I get now by my sins, will it bestead me *then*? the pleasure, the ease that I now find in sin, will it help me *there*? Alas no, it will then be my break-neck, it will be a Devil unto me: the more I have been delighted with it, the more it will gall me: the more I have gotten by it the more it will damne me: the sin which I most of all loved, will most of all torment me. *Eccles. 11. 9.* look thus upon sin.

The third means: *Dive into thy own soul and heart.* There is a tough brawn over thy heart, that it feels not its sins. Now Meditation must look through, and come to the heart at the *quick*, and cause the truth to dive into the deep places of the soul. When the timber is hard, the

workman

workman cannot thrust in the nail with the weight of his hand : no, he must *hammer* it in. Meditation is the hammering of the heart. It's a pertinent phrase, *Fer. 23, 24. Is not my word like a fire* (saith the Lord) *and like a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces?* There be two similitudes, first, of a *hammer* : the Word of God is the hammer ; meditation is the hand that taketh this hammer, and knocks the nail into the rocky heart, and makes it enter : Wilt thou not feel ? I'll make thee feel (saith Meditation) wilt thou not take notice of thy wretched estate ? Meditation comes with blow after blow, and makes us take notice. Secondly, of *fire* ; the word is like fire ; Meditation kindles it about the heart. A man benumbed with cold is senselesse ; the water frozen with cold, though the least pebble would have sunk in it before, now a great millstone is able to lye upon it, and not sink ; the water is able to bear it : so is the heart, be it's sins never so heavy, as the hill of *Basan*, yet it bears it and feels no weight : but Meditation thawes the heart, and then every sin pincheth and oppresseth. *Is not my word like fire?* as if he should say, think of it, and muse of it, and meditate of it, and thou shalt feel it as a fire. Meditation is the often smiting of the heart with this hammer ; so did *Ephraim smite upon his thigh, Fer. 31. 19.* like a man in a miserable agony, he thumps his own breast, and in a vexation strikes his hand on his thigh. Oh miserable wretch that I am ! So did *Ephraim*, Oh what an unruly Oxe am I ? how unwilling am I to bear the yoke of the Lord ? Oh, and oh the hardness of my heart ! oh that I could tell how to beat thee black and blue ! Many men smite their hearts, but they smite them not often enough. When *Elishah* bad *Joash* smite upon the ground, *he smote thrice, and stayed;* The man of God said to him in anger, *Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times, for then thou hadst smitten Syria, till thou hadst consumed them, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice. 2. King. 13. 19.* So men smite their hearts twice, or thrice, or so ; but they will not smite their sins dead : it may be they break the head of their sins, but they recover again, and grow strong upon them, as at first. Thou must smite five or six times, yea fifty times five times, till thou hast quite broken the impostume of thy heart. Meditate on the *mercies* of God, and with them smite it often, and often : Meditate on the *justice* of God, and with it smite it again, and again : Meditate on the *wrath* of God, which is as a consuming fire, and with it smite it soundly. Meditate on the *truth* of the Lord, this threatening and that threatening ; this commandment and that commandment this promise and that promise ; and with all these smite it to powder.

The fourth means, *Anticipate and prevent thine own heart* : meditate what thy heart will one day wish, if it be not humbled : and tell thy Soul as much ; thou wilt one day wish, Oh that I had been humbled under the reproofs of the Lord ! Oh that I had been wise to have understood my own mercy ! Cursed be the day that ever I neglected the means of grace ; so the Lord brings in a foolish obstinate sinner, cursing and banning his own soul, sobbing and howling at the last. *O how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof ! and have not observed the voice of my Teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instruct me?*

F

Pro.

Prov. 5. 12, 13. I had Ministers to preach to me, but I would not come at them: or if I did, I cared not for their doctrine, I had friends that advised me well; but woe is me damned wretch! I heeded them not. Thus thou wilt cast the fool into thine own teeth, and sling a thousand curses into thine own face, because of thy madness. I might have learned but I would not; I might have been humbled, but I would not: *I was almost in an evil in the midst of the assembly of the congregation, verse 14.* I lived where the Saints of God were in whole assemblies, but I mockt them, I hated them, I misliked them for being too precise. I was not ashamed of my security, no not in thy sight. Thus thou wilt cry out one day, if thou wilt not yeeld unto meditation, which must make this as present with thee. Know thou, O my soul, the time of thy *visitation* is at hand, thou wilt curse thy selfe hereafter, if thou dost not now be moved by Gods mercies, thou shalt never see mercy more: Now be awaked by Gods judgments, or else thou shalt feel them for evermore, now or for ever thou shalt roar for them. Then thou shalt curse thy gains and thy profits that bewitched thee, thou shalt curse thy pleasures and delights that besotted thee, curse thine one heart, and thine own soul, and thine own conscience that have damned thee. Meditation may tell thee, thus it will be with thee, unlesse thou obeyest now. *Hear ye me now, Oh ye Children and departs not from the words of my mouth, verse 7.* hear the word now, and obey it, let it not depart out thy meditation. Now be humbled with grace, or then thou shalt be humbled with horreur: then thou shalt wish, Oh that I had been ruled! When thou art in hell, then thou shalt meditate, Oh it was good counsel that such and such a Minister gave me, good counsel that such a friend, and such a brother gave me, but wretch that I was, I had not grace to follow it. I had more mind of my pleasures, more mind of my vanities than of grace. Oh if it were to do again, I would not do so for a thousand worlds: but alas, it is now too late. Therefore let Meditation presse this upon thee before-hand.

3. Now follows the third thing, how to put life to Meditation. Four duties are to be done to this purpose.

1. Let Meditation haunt the heart, let meditation dog thee with the hellish looks of thy finnes, and follow it with the dreadful vengeance of God, haunt it with promises, haunt it with threatnings, haunt it with mercies, and haunt it with judgements, and haunt it with Commandments. The heart is like the Beaver, when it perceiveth it cannot possibly escape from the Huntsman, it cuts off the Member for which it is hunted, and flings it down, and so escapes (saith *Asop*.) So pursue thy heart with its sins, with the hue and cry of Gods mercies, pursue it with the bubblub of Gods judgements, let meditation haunt it, and let thy soul see it shall never be rid of the haunt, at last it will be content to part with its lusts. Let Meditation say, Wilt thou forsake thine own mercies? If thou livest thus and thus, If thou prayest thus and thus, dead-heartedly, thou kickest against thine own mercy, wilt thou rust upon the pricks? This mercy thou mayst have, if thou wouldst amend, that vengeance thou shalt have, if thou do not amend: Either cut off thy

sins

sins, or else God will cut off thy soul. *Return, O Shulamite, return, return,* its the voice of Christ to thee: Let Meditation say, *Return, O my soul,* return, return, and thou mayst be saved; return, or else thou shalt be condemned. Now what was the effect of this haunting meditation; *Or ere I was aware, my soul made me like the Chariots of Aminadab,* verse 12. That is, my soul musing and meditating on these and these commandments, it so humbled my soul, that it made me yeeld; yea, and made me run as fast as the Chariots of *Aminadab, freely and willingly to* Christ.

Deal with thy heart as *Iunius* his father dealt with him: he seeing his Son was *Atheistical*, he laid a Bible in every room, that his son could look in no room, but behold a Bible haunted him, upbraiding him, *Wilt thou not read me, Atheist? Wilt thou not read me? And so at last he read it, and was converted from his Atheisme: So let meditation* haunt thy heart, hold forth the commandments, promises, threatnings of the Lord, that thy heart may see them, let meditation haunt thee in thy luke-warmnesse: prayest thou thus luke-warm? This prayer will break thy neck one day. Repentest thou? This luke warm repentance will cause God to spue thee out of his mouth. Hearest thou, speakest thou, thinkest thou? These luke warm duties wil confound thee ere long, if thou lookest not to it.

Let meditations haunt thee, as they haunted *Nebemiah* with warnings, *ten times* (saith the Text) they sent to *Nebemiah, they will be upon thee, Nehem. 4. 12.* Beware of the danger, the enemy will be upon thee: ten times they warned him, never giving over till *Nebemiah* looked about him, *verse 13.* So do thou haunt thine own heart: they will be upon thee, this curse, this wrath, that hardnesse of heart, this security wil be upon thee. Ten times, yea, a thousand times ten times, never give over thine own soul, untill thou hast made it to submit. Indeed there be some, let God send Meditations to haunt them, and follow them, saying, Repent, leave this or that sin? why wilt thou be dam'd with this sin? Oh forsake it, presently they will gagge the mouth of meditation, and of conscience, and strike them stark dead: as *Abner*, when *Azabel* would haunt him and follow him, and turn neither to the right hand, nor to the left, but follow him at the heels. *Turn aside* (saith *Abner*) but he would not turn aside from following him. Turn aside from me (sayes *Abner* again) or I will kill thee, but he would not turn aside, he would follow him close: Then he up with his Spear and slew him, *2. Sam. 2. 19. 20, 21, 22, 23.* So many deal with the Meditation of conscience, when conscience would dogg them, and weary them out of their sins, they will not, when conscience would haunt them, they will not be haunted therewith, when conscience would follow them up with their desperate wilfulnesse, they gall, and wound, and murder conscience to be quiet. But *David* haunted his heart, and would have it haunted.

The second duty: *Let Meditation trace thy heart*, as it should haunt thee, so also let it trace thee in the same steps. So would the Church, *Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord: Lam. 3. 40.* The word (in the originall, sayes *Buxtorf*) signifies, *track her steps, step by step:*

this step was in the ditch, that in the mire, that step awry : track them all, that we may undergo them all again, and turn unto the Lord. Never pray but let Meditation track thy prayer : this passage was right, that passage was amis. Never keep a Sabbath but let Meditation track thy keeping of it, this duty was sincere, that was rotten. Never do any thing, but let Meditation track it. This thought, this word, this action was warrantable, that was out of the way : track thy heart, as the Lord tracked *Elijah*, he trackt him in the wilderness, he trackt him under the juniper tree, he trackt him in the cave, *What dost thou here Elijah ? go forth :* 1. Kings 19. *What dost thou here Elijah, go, return.* He trackt him in the Mount, *Go, return, what dost thou here Elijah ?* this is not a place for thee. So let Meditation wait thee, what dost thou here, O sinner? what dost thou here, drunkard? in thy Cupps, or in thy prophaneness, what dost thou here? this is not a place for thee, unlesse thou mean to perish. It may be thou art now scar'd out of these sins, and art run into *civil honesty*, let Meditation still track thee. What dost thou do here, O sinner? Civillie is not a case fit for thee, unlesse thou wert better, thou shalt be torn in pieces. It may be thou art driven out of thy civility, and art gone further, to the profession of Religion, though it be without the power of it, let meditation still wait thee. What dost thou do here, O sinner? this sorry kind of profession is not a race fit for thee : unlesse thou be godlier than so, thou shalt be devoured with everlasting fire.

Meditation is like the coursing of a Hare in the snow; the Hare fearing to be taken by the dogs, Here she stops, there she leaps, here she inter-leaps, there she goes backward, and forward, upward and downward, and all to deceive the dogs, that they may not find her, but they goe, smelling, winding and turning, and track her step by step, till they find her : so meditation is the coursing of the soul, the heart hath a thousand fetches, a thousand Meanders and labyrinths, a thousand crosse windings, and compassings, and deceits, and all to puzzle Meditation. But Meditation must track the heart, as God dealt with *Job*, *he counted his steps*, step by step, *Job* 14. 16. Meditation is the souls bloud-hound, it will never leave howling the wrath of God, till he hath taken the hearts sin for a prey, Meditation haunts it out of one sin, and it runs into another, Meditation haunts it out of that, and it runnes into a third : Meditation is a good pursivant, it prosecutes the sinner, and attaches him.

Now because the heart is most cunning, and hardest to be trackt by its sent, when the heart hath taken up abundance of good duties, and attained unto sundry graces, these good duties and common graces drown the sent of the hearts wickedness. As Huntsmen observe, that the hounds cannot well hunt in the Spring, as *Theophrastus*, and *Pollux*, and others observe : the sweet odors of the flowers and herbs (sayes *Oppian*) hinder the hounds from smelling the hare : so it is with Meditation, it is hard for it to track the heart in the green Spring-time of *civil honesty* and formality. And therefore let Meditation make diligent search, saith he.

The third duty : *hale thy heart before God*, and let Meditation bring it before

before his throne, and there powre out thy complaint against it before God, out with all thy villany there, and article against thy self, and bring as many complaints against thy self before heaven, as there be drops in a bucket full of water. So doe the godly: *I poured out all my complaints before him* (Psal. 102, in the preface) I poured out my complaints as a man powreth out water out of a vessel; generally men are willing to call for mercy, but they are not so willing to *bring complaints* unto God against themselves: ye shall have them *whisper* after the Minister, as he is begging for pardon and mercy, but they will not do so, whiles he is complaining of their sins, the hellish and devellish abominations of their heart. These are men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, and shall never have mercy, till they be as forward to complain of their sins, as to be plaintiffs for mercy.

When a man in Meditation meets with a hard matter, that he cannot sufficiently dive into, he breaks it to another: so do thou to God; break all thy heart to God, tell him of thy hardnesse of heart, of the pride of thy heart, of the desperate prophanesie of thy heart: but take these rules with thee;

First, thy complaint must be *full of sorrow* Psal. 55.

Secondly, it must be a *full complaint* of all thy sins, and of all thy lusts, Lam. 2. 18, 19. *Poure out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord.* Water runs all out of a vessell, when you turn the mouth downward; never a spoonfull will stay behind. The wicked, will not complain of their sins fully: they make hypocriticall professions. If it be a sin, I am sorry for it; (says one) if it be naught, I cry God mercy, (saith another) when their own consciences tell them it is a sin, yet they will not complain of it absolutely.

Thirdly, thy complaint must be with *aggravation*: thou must aggravate thy sins by all the *circumstances*, that may shew it to be odious, as Peter did: *When he thought thereon, he wept*, Mark 14. 72. the Originall hath it, *he cast all these things one upon another.* Wretch that I was, Christ was my master, and yet I denied him, such a good master, that he called me before any of my fellow-Apostles, and yet I denied him; I was ready to sink once, he denied not me: I was to be damned once, he denied not my soul, and yet I denied him; he told me of this sin before-hand, that I might take heed of it, and yet I denied him. I said, I will not commit it, nor forsake him, and yet I denied him: yea, this very night, no longer ago, did I say and say again, I would not deny him, and yet I denied him; yea, I said, though all others denied him, yet would not I; and yet worse than all others, I denied him with a witness before a maid, before a damsel; nay, more filthy beast than I am, I said I did not know the man; nay more, I swore I did not know him; nay more than all this, I did even curse my selfe with an oath, that I did not know him: nay more, all this evill did I, not above five or six strides from my Lord and Saviour: nay more, even then, when if ever I should have stood for him, I should have done it then, when all the world did forsake him. O wretch that I was, I denied him I he cast up all these circumstances together, and meditating on them, *he wrem out, and wept bitterly.*

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Fourthly

Fourthly, thy complaint must be a *selfe-condemning complaint*: thou must condemn thy self, and lay thy selfe at Hell gates, and set the naked point of Gods vengeance at thy throat. Thus and thus have I lived, damned, cast-away, as I have deserved to be! So did *Exra* in the behalfe of the Jews, *Exra* 9.

For 1. He fell on his face; he did not bow down on his knees; but like a man astonished, he fell on his knees, ready to fall on the ground in amazement.

2. He spread out his hand unto the Lord, verse 5, as if he should say, here is my heart-blood, Lord here is my breast, Lord we deserve thou shouldst stab us with thy wrath.

3. He *blushes* to looke Heaven in the face, verse 6. so vexed to think on the sins of his people; that he is even confounded to beg mercy.

4. He is (as it were) dumb and speechlesse before God: *And now our God, what shall we say after all this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, verse 10.* Shall I excuse the matter? alas! it is inexcusable, *What shall we say after all this? Shall we call for thy patience? Wee had it, and yet were little the better. Shall we call for mercy, Why? we had it, and yet our stubborn hearts would not come down, I know not what to say for our selves: for we have sinned against thee.*

5. He declares Gods truth, that he had warned them by his Prophets, (*vers. 11, 12.*) but no warning can better us.

6. He shows how God had punished them, yet they would not be humbled: for all that God had brought upon them *lesse evils than they deserved*, and wrought deliverance for them, which they could not have expected, *What shall we say, should we for all this break thy commandments? verse 13, 14.* What can we expect but hell and confusion?

7. He is sensible of Gods Judgements and righteousness: *O Lord thou art righteous*: as if he should say, How canst thou spare us for this sinne? How can it stand with thy righteousness? How is it that such hell-hounds as we are, should live above ground, when thou art so righteous a God? It is a wonder that the earth opens not her mouth for to swallow us up quick: for, *O Lord thou art righteous.*

8. He layes down his soul, and all the peoples souls at Gods feet; as if he should say, here we be, thou maist damn us if thou wilt; *Behold we are all here before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee, because of this, verse 15.* Behold here are we: rebels we are: here are our heads, and our throats before thee, if now thou shouldst take us from our knees unto hell, and from our prayers unto damnation, we cannot ask thee, why thou doest so: Oh it's mercy, it's mercy indeed, that we have been spared. Thus Meditation must bring our hearts before God, and there complain against them before heaven.

Meditation should deal with the heart, as the Father did with his possessed child, who carried him to Christ, saying, Master my child is possessed with

with a Devil, even a dumb spirit, and I spake to thy Disciples that they should cast him out, but they could not, Mark 9. 18. Bring him to me (saith Christ) verse 19. How long is this agoe since this came to him? Of a child (saith the Father) and often it hath cast him into the fire, and often into the water to destroy him, but if thou canst do any thing (as certainly thou canst do all things) have compassion on us, and help us, verse 22. And then Christ helpt him. So let Meditation drive thy heart to God, saying; Lord here is my heart (I beleieve) possessed with a Devil; for it is, a most abominable sinful heart: I brought my heart to thy Ministers to cure it, to Sermons, to Prayers, to all other good duties, but they could not help me, my heart is a devillish heart, still my heart is wicked, and rebellious still, the Devil, Oh, the Devil is in it still! Oh, how he tempts me! he holds me, he casts me into the fire of this lust, and into the water of ever-flowing iniquity. Have thou compassion, come and help me, for my heart is miserably vexed with Satan; when I pray, the Devil stuffs me with dead thoughts, and drousie desires, the Devil fills me with wandering Imaginations, and I know not what, when I hear the Word, the Devil makes me to rile up against it, or forget it, or not obey it; when the Sabbath is come, the devil sets me on thinking my own thoughts, and speaking my own words, when a Sacrament is come, the Devil hinders me in false examination, The Devil disappoints me of my preparation: Oh have thou compassion on me,

The fourth duty, *Let Meditation, when it hath haled thy heart before God, there cast thee down before him*: when Meditation hath searched out thy case, and made it appear how wofull it is, then let it lay thee along before God, with *What shall I do to be saved?* So it did with them in Acts 2. 27. as if they should say (saith Chrysostome) we have not one jot of hope to find mercy, so long as we live as we doe. What shall we do? Say what thou wilt, our eares are ready to hear it, command what thou wilt, our soules, what ever it be, are willing to do it: bid us suffer whatsoever thou pleasest, tell us what it is, and we will endure it. They did not say (notes Chrysostome) *How shall we be saved,* as wicked men do, they desire to be saved, but their main care is not to see what they must do, they are told what they must do, and yet refuse to do it, but thy chief study must be, to cast thy self down before God with the good Jaylor, *Sirs, What shall I do to be saved?* Acts 16. 30. First, *What must I do?* and then *to be saved*. First thy care must be what to do to get out of thy sins, how to be rid of thy lusts, and then to be saved, as if he should say, I see I am at a damned passe, and therefore I was a making away my self, the fire of hell did slay my soul: but now is there hope of salvation? is there indeed? Oh tel me, I am willing to do any thing, what must I do? Keep nothing back of all the will of the Lord: be it punishment to suffer, tell me of it, I am ready to bear it; be it precept for to do, though never so like some, O let me know it, and I would not refuse it. *What must I do to be saved?* When the heart is thus humbled upon sound Meditation, it is willing to do or suffer any thing. *Jehoiada is willing to be cast into the sea, being humbled, Jehoiada 1. 2. Here I am, Lord deal with me as thou wilt.*

Motive 1.

The first Motive. *Is it not a folly not to meditate?* Should a man walk on in his course, and not meditate whether it will tend? When he falls into mischief, what will he say? I never thought on this before, I never considered that this would be the end. Now it is the part of a fool to say, *I never thought*, as the Latine proverb hath it; when the Steed is stollen, if he should then shut the Stable door, what wouldest thou say, He should have thought of that before. The rich man in the Gospel had these meditations in his heart; he thought within himself, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? He said in his heart, This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and will say to my soul, *Soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry*; Luke 12. 17, 18, 19, 20. *Thou fool* (said God) *this night shall thy soul be required of thee, them whose shall these things be that thou hast provided?* God said thus unto him: not as if God spake thus familiarly unto him (saith *Theophylact*) but it is a parable, and God sayes so in his word, *Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul of thee*. In this night of thy blindness, in this night of thy security, shall they require it: he doth not say, I will require thy soul of thee, but *they*: he doth not say who, but *they*, the Devils in hell. God knows who shall come, thou shalt dye, and they shall fetch away thy soul to hell: *they* shall require it. A goldy mans soul is not required, but rather he requires God to take away his soul: he is willing to dye, that he may be with Christ: but a wicked mans soul is required of him: he would willingly not dye, but that his soul is required of him, and he must dye. Doubtlesse the rich fool now thought with himself, I never thought that I should have dyed so soon, and therefore now he calls (it may be) to his Lord, Lord, and cries God mercy. But what will they say to him? Thou shouldest have thought on this before.

The wise man shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools, Prov. 3. 3. The wise and prudent, those that truly meditate of things beforehand, shall have glory; but fools that hope to be promoted to glory and salvation, shame and confusion of face shall be all the promotion, and when they come thereto, besides their expectation; what will they say? We never thought it would be thus with us before; but fools as we were, we thought to be promoted to heaven: like *Haman*, when King *Ahasuerus* said unto him, What shall be done to the man whom the King will honour? O thus and thus (saith *Haman*) for he thought, I am the man whom the King intendeth to honour, *Ester* 6. 6. but when *Haman* was presently after to be hanged on a gallows, he might rightly say, I never thought of this before. So, what will be done to the man whom the Lord will honour? Thus and thus sayest thou, he shall have mercies, blessings, heaven: I, for thou thinkest I am the man that God intendeth thus to honour; but when thou art come to hell, what wilt thou say then? I never thought of this before, that so it would be.

Motive 2.

The second Motive is, *Thou wouldest be like to have the brand of a Reprobate*: Not to meditate, is that brand, *The wicked through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; neither is God in all his thoughts*, Psal.

Psal. 10. 4. He scorns to be so poring upon Bibles, to be so wracking his mind with his sins; *He hath said in his heart, God will not require it, ver.* 13. God requires no such scrupulosity nor strictnesse.

The third Motive is, *Thou wouldest be loth to rob God of his honour*, and the maine part of his service, which is meditation. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, Matth.* 22. 38. How can this be true of them (saith *Chrysostome*) who become *vain in their imaginations*? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind: And so do I (saist thou:) So dost thou? What, and not love God with all that is in thy heart? Thy thoughts are in thy heart, thy meditations are in thy mind; If thy thoughts then, and meditation be not of God, thou dost not love God with all thy heart: *David* did not onely pray, that *the words of his mouth*, but also that *the thoughts of his heart* should be ever acceptable to the Lord, *Psal.* 19. 14. not onely that he might be full of heavenly communication in his mouth, but also of holy meditation in his heart. *Behold* (saith he) *thou requirest truth in the inward parts, Psal.* 51. 5. And meditation is one of the duties of truth in the inward parts.

The fourth Motive: *Thou wouldest be loth that all the worship thou givest to God, should be abominable*: so it will be without meditation; meditation before it, meditation after it.

First, *Thou must meditate before thou goest about a duty of Gods worship*: consider before thou hear the word of God, meditate what thou art going about, *Hearken O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear, Psal.* 45. 10. First, *consider and meditate*, and then *incline thine ear*. This is part of those words often in Scripture, *Be ready, be ready: Be ready and come up*, saith God, *Exod.* 34. 2. *Be ready against the third day*, *Exod.* 29. *Gather your selves together, Lep.* 2. 1. that is, *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*, *Amos* 4. 12.

Secondly *meditate after the duty*. When men part with men, they use to give one another a farewell, and not bluntly deliver their mind one to another, and so turn their backs one upon another. *Lyfias* could not write a letter to *Felix*, and break up abruptly, but he gave him a farewell *Acts* 23. 30. Neither may a man, when a duty is done, go away bluntly from God, but give him a farewell by holy meditation. It's an unseemly kicking of a duty, as most men do when they are come to the end of their prayers, *to whom with the Father and holy Spirit be ascribed all praise and glory, Amen*; Come is dinner ready? or what news do you hear? This is unmannerlinesse towards the ordinances of God. A man that hath been at a good dinner, will sit a while at it, or walk a while, he will not presently run to his work, that the meat may digest the better: So when thou hast been at Gods dainties, sit after it a while, pawfing and meditating thereof, as often as thou well mayest, let it have its working a while.

What is the reason thou hast so many by-thoughts in prayer? Because thou dost not meditate before hand and after. Hence it is, that thine eyes are not directed to the duty, but like a blind Archer thou shootest but by aim; when the good Archer shoots, he must have the white in his

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eye

eye still, which he must leuell at. *My voice shalt thou hear betimes in the morning, in the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and will look up, Ps. 5. 3.* How came that? you may look on his meditations, *verse 1.* By meditation he was wont to direct and leuell his prayers to God. Wicked men know that God is before them, as a blind man may learn the Butt is before him, but they see not God before them to direct their prayers unto him: they pray at rovers. Thou must use then to meditate of God, that thy prayers may be directed: if thou prayest not thus, thy prayers are like them in the Prophet, who *drew near to God with their lips, but their hearts were far from him*, like an arrow beside the Butt, or far from the mark, either wide or short. *They have not cryed unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds, Hosea 7. 14.* They prayed, but they praied not to me; (saith the Lord) as the white may say of a bungling Archer, he shoots, but not at me when he shot, he shot another way. God counts all such prayers no better than *howling of Dragons and wilde beasts*; (so the word signifies saith *Scindler*) God would as lief, and rather to, that a Dog, or a Wolf, or Dragon should howl in his hearing, than hear such a prayer as this is. The onely way therefore to perform duties of Gods worship purely, is chiefly *meditation, meditation, meditation.*